

Doing What's Right for Mission Bay Park

October 15, 2009

By KEVIN FAULCONER



For many of us, Mission Bay Park holds special memories. Numerous San Diegans have exchanged wedding vows at the park. Many more have held holiday barbecues there every summer and just about every weekend you can find parents teaching their children how to fly kites near the shore.

It's an important place to all San Diegans, which is why I'm excited that the new Mission Bay Park Committee is scheduled to be up and running next month.

The City Council is confirming appointees to the new committee, which is expected to hold its first meeting in November.

The 11-member committee was created by Proposition C, which voters overwhelmingly approved last November. The committee will oversee funding of priority projects that are now possible because of Prop C.

Prop C ensures that lease money that is generated in Mission Bay Park stays in Mission Bay Park, and the committee members will be the ones who will carry out the voters' will and ensure the future success of Mission Bay Park.

The group's monthly meetings are open to the public, and I encourage you to attend.

Mission Bay is the largest manmade aquatic park in the world and a San Diego treasure, but improvements have been few and far between.

Thanks to Prop C, Mission Bay Park now has a permanent revenue source dedicated to addressing a backlog of capital improvement projects.

The Mission Bay Park Master Plan identified more than \$300 million in such improvements 15 years ago — most of which are outstanding and include:

- Restoration of passable waterways
- Wetlands expansions
- Restoration of beach sand and the stabilization of erosion
- Completion of bicycle and pedestrian paths.

I grew up outside of San Diego, but I spent numerous summers on Mission Bay. Back then, I never pictured myself as one of the bay's strongest supporters, and I also never knew that one day I'd compete in Mission Bay Super Sprint triathlons.

I competed in two this year, including one on Oct. 4 with 1,000 others. We swam in the bay, biked around Fiesta Island and ran in Mission Bay Park. I'm a novice. There's no denying that. But I had a lot of fun and it was great to see so many people enjoying Mission Bay.

Prior to becoming District 2's council representative, I chaired the Mission Bay Park Committee. Last year, I helped draft and campaigned hard for Proposition C.

I've said this before and it's something you'll hear me say again: From now on, we're going to do what's right when it comes to Mission Bay Park, and I will continue to lead that effort while ensuring taxpayers get value for their investment.

Mission Bay isn't the only bay in District 2, and it is not the only one that's going to see improvements.

Over in Point Loma, the La Playa stormdrain project will improve water quality in San Diego Bay by replacing two outfalls that have been badly damaged for years.

Work on this \$500,000 project began in August and is expected to be completed this month.

As you can see, protecting San Diego's bays for residents, tourists and future generations is important to me and something so many of you have said is important to you.

— *Kevin Faulconer sits on the San Diego City Council as the representative for District 2, which includes Ocean Beach, Point Loma and Mission Bay.*